

CLAIM LISTING:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Claim 1 (Previously Presented) A process for the preparation of polyamines of the diphenylmethane series, comprising

- a) reacting aniline and formaldehyde in the presence of an acid catalyst to form polyamines,
- b) neutralizing the reaction mixture with a base, and
- c) phase separating the neutralized reaction mixture, thereby forming an organic phase comprising polyamines of the diphenylmethane series and an aqueous phase,

wherein the quantity of base in step b) exceeds 100% of the stoichiometrically required quantity for neutralization of the reaction mixture, and wherein at least one alcohol is added (1) at the beginning of step b), (2) during step b), or (3) after step b) and before step c), with the molar ratio of said alcohol to said formaldehyde being at least 0.02:1.

Claims 2-7 (Cancelled).

Claim 8 (Currently Amended) A process for the preparation of polyamines of the diphenylmethane series, comprising

- a) reacting aniline and formaldehyde in the presence of an acid catalyst to form polyamines,
- b) neutralizing the reaction mixture with a base,
- c) phase separating the neutralized reaction mixture, thereby forming an organic phase and an aqueous phase,

d) adding said an alcohol and an additional quantity of a base to the organic phase formed in c), thereby forming an alkaline reaction mixture.

and

e) phase separating the alkaline reaction mixture from d) into an organic phase comprising polyamines of the diphenylmethane series and an aqueous phase,

wherein the quantity of base added in step d) exceeds 1% of the stoichiometrically required quantity for neutralization and in which the molar ratio of said alcohol to said formaldehyde is at least 0.02:1.

Claim 9 (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 1, wherein said base comprises an aqueous sodium hydroxide solution.

Claim 10 (Original) The process of Claim 1, wherein said alcohol is selected from the group consisting of: methanol, ethanol, n-propanol, isopropanol, monoethanolamine, N-substituted derivatives of monoethanolamine, diethanolamine, N-substituted derivatives of diethanolamine, triethanolamine, and mixtures thereof.

Claim 11 (Previously Presented) A process for the preparation of polyisocyanates of the diphenylmethane series comprising

- a) reacting aniline and formaldehyde in the presence of an acid catalyst to form polyamines,
- b) neutralizing the reaction mixture with a base,
- c) phase separating the neutralized reaction mixture, thereby forming an organic phase comprising polyamines of the diphenylmethane series and an aqueous phase,

and

d) phosgenating the resultant polyamines into the corresponding polyisocyanates,

wherein the quantity of base in step b) exceeds 100% of the stoichiometrically required quantity for neutralization of the reaction mixture, and wherein at least one alcohol is added (1) at the beginning of step b), (2) during step b), or (3) after step b) and before step c), with the molar ratio of said alcohol to said formaldehyde being at least 0.02:1.

Claims 12-17 (Cancelled).

Claim 18 (Currently Amended) A process for the preparation of polyisocyanates of the diphenylmethane series, comprising:

- a) reacting aniline and formaldehyde in the presence of an acid catalyst to form polyamines,
- b) neutralizing the reaction mixture with a base,
- c) phase separating the neutralized reaction mixture, thereby forming an organic phase and an aqueous phase,
- d) adding at least one alcohol and an additional quantity of a base to the organic phase, thereby forming an alkaline reaction mixture,
- e) phase separating the alkaline reaction mixture from d) into an organic phase comprising polyamines of the diphenylmethane series and into an aqueous phase,

and

- f) phosgenating the organic phase comprising polyamines of the diphenylmethane series to yield the corresponding polyisocyanates, wherein the quantity of base added in step d) exceeds 1% of the stoichiometrically required quantity for neutralization and in which the molar ratio of said alcohol to said formaldehyde is at least 0.02:1.

Claim 19 (Original) The process of Claim 11, wherein said base comprises an aqueous sodium hydroxide solution.

Claim 20 (Original) The process of Claim 11, wherein said alcohol is selected from the group consisting of: methanol, ethanol, n-propanol, isopropanol, monoethanolamine, N-substituted derivatives of monoethanolamine, diethanolamine, N-substituted derivatives of diethanolamine, triethanolamine, and mixtures thereof.

Claim 21 (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 8, wherein said base comprises an aqueous sodium hydroxide solution.

Claim 22 (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 8, wherein said alcohol is selected from the group consisting of: methanol, ethanol, n-propanol, isopropanol, monoethanolamine, N-substituted derivatives of monoethanolamine, diethanolamine, N-substituted derivatives of diethanolamine, triethanolamine, and mixtures thereof.

Claim 23 (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 18, wherein said base comprises an aqueous sodium hydroxide solution.

Claim 24 (Previously Presented) The process of Claim 18, wherein said alcohol is selected from the group consisting of: methanol, ethanol, n-propanol, isopropanol, monoethanolamine, N-substituted derivatives of monoethanolamine, diethanolamine, N-substituted derivatives of diethanolamine, triethanolamine, and mixtures thereof.